

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A telephone call processing method, comprising the steps of:

operating a call processing device to provide an automated operator position identified by a first operator position identifier;

operating a telephone switch, coupled to said call processing device, to provide a call, requesting information, to the automated operator position identified by said first operator position identifier which is indistinguishable to the switch from a manned operator position identifier; and

wherein the step of operating a call processing device to provide an automated operator position includes:

i. operating the call processing device to collect call related information in an automated manner;

ii. operating the call processing device to transmit a call transfer instruction to the switch to cause the switch to transfer the call to a manned operator position for additional call processing, the manned operator position being identified to the switch by a second operator position identifier; and

iii. operating the call processing device to transfer at least some of the collected call related information collected in an automated manner to the manned operator position.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein said call processing device is an operator workstation, the method further comprising the step of:

operating said call processing device to provide a manned operator position at the same time as it provides said automated operator position, the manned operator position being identified to the switch by a different operator position identifier than said first operator position identifier.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein operating the call processing device to provide an automated operator position further comprises:

performing a speech recognition operation on speech received from the caller; and

prompting the caller for city and listing information.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:

using the results of the speech recognition operation to initiate a database look-up operation.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method of claim 4, wherein the collected call related information transferred to the manned operator position includes at least some data returned to the call processing device in response to the database look-up operation, the step of transferring at least some data to the second operator position including the step of transmitting data from the call processing device to the manned operator position over a data link, that is separate from the telephone switch, which couples the automated call processing device to the second operator position.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the transfer of at least some of the collected call related information is performed in response to a signal from the manned operator position.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the transfer of at least some of the collected call related information is performed in response to a signal from the manned operator position.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of:

recording at least some audio information provided by a caller to the call processing device; and

wherein the collected call related information transferred to the manned operator position includes recorded audio information.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of:

processing audio information provided by the caller to remove silence there from prior to recording.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of:

performing compression on the audio information provided by the caller prior to recording.

Claims 11-15 (canceled):

Claim 16 (previously presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of operating the call processing device further includes:

operating the automated call processing device to perform a line information database look-up operation using automatic number identification information provided by the switch;

performing a business directory database look-up operation using location information returned from said line information database look-up operation to identify multiple businesses near the location of the caller; and

providing, to the caller, information on multiple businesses near the location of the caller obtained from the business directory database look-up operation.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The method of claim 16, wherein the automated call processing device is an unmanned device;

wherein the business directory database look-up operation is a restaurant listing look-up operation which returns information on multiple restaurants near the location from which the call was placed.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The method of claim 17, further comprising:

performing a text to speech operation to convert returned text information into speech.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A method of providing information to a caller, comprising the steps of:

receiving a call at a telephone switch;

connecting the call to an automated call processing device coupled to the switch, wherein said automated call processing device is identified by a first operator position identifier which is indistinguishable to the switch from a manned operator position identifier;

operating the automated call processing device to determine the location of the caller using automatic number identification information provided by the switch;

receiving from the caller a telephone number corresponding to a destination which the caller is trying to reach;

performing a database look-up operation, using the telephone number information received from the caller, to determine the address corresponding to the provided telephone number;

performing a directional information database look-up operation to determine a route from the location of the caller to the destination; and

providing direction information to the caller.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of claim 19, wherein the step of providing direction information to the caller, includes performing a text to speech operation.

Claim 21 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein the step of providing information to the caller includes the step of faxing directions to a telephone number specified by the caller.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The method of claim 19, wherein the automated call processing device is an automated operator workstation, the method further comprising:

operating the automated operator workstation to login to the switch using an operator position identifier prior to performing the step of connecting the call~~second look-up operation is a directional database look-up operation~~].

Claim 23 (currently amended): The method of claim 18, wherein the automated call processing device is an automated operator workstation, the method further comprising:

operating the automated operator workstation to login to the switch using an operator position identifier prior to performing the step of connecting the call ~~{second look-up operation is a restaurant database look-up operation}~~.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The method of claim 18, wherein the step of performing a the text to speech operation includes:

operating a text to speech device coupled to the automated device and to the switch to provide information in the form of speech to the caller.

Claim 25 (currently amended): The method of claim 18, wherein the step of performing a the text to speech operation includes:

operating a text to speech device included in the automated device to provide information to the caller.

Claims 26-32 (canceled):

Claim 33 (previously presented): A telephone system, comprising the steps of:

a call processing device including means for providing an automated operator position identified by a first operator position identifier;

a telephone switch, coupled to said call processing device, for providing a call requesting information, to the automated operator position identified by said first operator position identifier that is indistinguishable to the switch from a manned operator position identifier; and

the call processing device including:

- i. means for collecting call related information in an automated manner;
- ii. means for transmitting a call transfer instruction to the switch to cause the switch to transfer the call to a manned operator position for additional call processing, the manned operator position being identified to the switch by a second operator position identifier; and
- iii. means for transferring at least some of the collected call related information collected in an automated manner to the manned operator position.

Claim 34 (original): The system of claim 33, wherein said call processing device is an operator workstation, the call processing device further including:

means for providing a manned operator position at the same time as it provides said automated operator position, the manned operator position being identified to the switch by a different operator position identifier than said first operator position identifier.

Claim 35 (original): The system of claim 34, wherein said call processing device further includes:

means for logging onto said switch using said first operator position identifier;

means for logging out from said switch using said first operator position identifier; and

means for detecting when a human operator is present at said operator workstation and for initiating a logging onto the switch using the second operator position

identifier in response to detecting that a human operator is present.